

# **IRTS Radio News Bulletin Sunday 6th December 2020**

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## **International Space Station Contact with Athlone School**

A school contact between the International Space Station and pupils from Athlone Community College is scheduled for tomorrow, Monday, 7th December. This contact is being facilitated by members of Shannon Basin Radio Club and South Dublin Radio Club, who are setting up a 2 metre base station at the college over the weekend. The Athlone station will use the call sign EI1ISS. The contact will happen at around 2.50pm on Monday and the proceedings will be live streamed on YouTube, commencing at 1.30pm. A link to this live-stream is on the IRTS home page [www.irts.ie](http://www.irts.ie) and it should also be possible to hear the ISS side of the contact on 145.800MHz. These contacts are designed to promote interest among schools in science and technology subjects and also to promote amateur radio. IRTS is supporting this ARISS (Amateur Radio on the International Space Station) event which takes place in cooperation with the international space agencies involved in the ISS project from the United States, the Russian Federation, Japan, Canada and the EU through the European Space Agency.

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## **YOTA Activity Month.**

December is designated as Youngsters On The Air (YOTA) month and young operators will be active around the world, mainly from stations with YOTA in the suffix. A special YOTA award scheme will operate for the month where you get points for working stations with the YOTA suffix. At the time of writing, 41 stations are listed as participants including our own EI0YOTA. There will be more added to the list as time goes on. If you are interested in activating the EI0YOTA callsign, please get in contact with the IRTS Youth Coordinator, Niall EI6HIB by email at ei6hib at hotmail.com. All the details are available on the YOTA website at events.ham-yota.com

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## **Croatia on 40MHz Band**

Croatia (9A) becomes the latest country to grant access to the new 40 MHz band Dragan, 9A6W reports that the national telecom authorities in Croatia have given him a one-year experimental licence to operate from 40.660MHz to 40.700MHz in a slice

of spectrum referred to as the Industrial, Scientific & Medical (ISM) band. Croatia is now the fifth country in which it is possible to operate legally on 40MHz. Ireland, Slovenia & South Africa already have allocations on the band while Lithuania is willing to allocate spot frequencies for experimental purposes. It is hoped that other Croatian stations will follow Dragan's example and apply for permission to operate on this new amateur band. More information on [ei7gl.blogspot dot com](http://ei7gl.blogspot.com).

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### **IARU Conference 2020 Report Available**

Each IARU Region holds a General Conference every three years, timed so that there is one regional conference every year. Their role is to decide Regional Policy and set the Regional work agenda and budget for the following three years. The report on the recent Region 1 virtual conference and the reports of all conferences dating back to 1950 are available on the Region 1 website at [www.iau-rl.org](http://www.iau-rl.org) The new VHF Handbook, version 9.00, should also be available on the IARU Region 1 website. The Winter edition of Echo Ireland will also carry reports on the conference.

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### **December GEO Newsletter available for free download**

The December PDF of the GEO Newsletter weather satellite publication produced by the Group for Earth Observation is now available for free download The Group for Earth Observation's aim is to enable amateur reception of weather and earth imaging satellites that are in orbit or planned for launch in the near future. Membership of GEO is free. Download the GEO Newsletter from [leshamilton.co.uk/GEO/newsletter.htm](http://leshamilton.co.uk/GEO/newsletter.htm)

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### **Arecibo Radio Telescope Damaged Beyond Repair**

The historic Arecibo radio telescope in Puerto Rico, once the largest in the world, has collapsed before its scheduled demolition could begin. The telescope, which had been shut by the U.S. National Science Foundation following storm damage, was credited with unlocking numerous astronomical mysteries for more than 50 years. On Tuesday, December 1st, the telescope's 900-ton receiver platform fell 400 feet, landing on its reflector dish. It was the final blow to the radio telescope, where an auxiliary cable had snapped in August, causing damage to the reflector dish and receiver platform. Then last month, a main cable broke. Built in the 1960s, the telescope was part of a 1974 research project into gravitational waves that led to a Nobel Prize in Physics in 1993. The telescope also followed asteroids on their earthbound paths but became quite an attraction itself, drawing some 90,000 visitors a year.

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## Solar Update

Tad Cook, K7RA, Seattle reports that Sunspot Cycle 25 is one year old and increasing solar activity continues to surprise and amaze. Average daily sunspot numbers more than doubled every week over the past few weeks. Two weeks ago, he reported average daily sunspot numbers of 12. Last week, the average was 27.9. This week the average daily sunspot number sits at 57.6. In the past week the highest daily sunspot number was 84 on Sunday, November 29, and solar flux also peaked that day, at 116.3, pushing the week's average solar flux to 108.1, up from 90.1 over the previous 7 days, and from 79.8 the week prior to that.

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## On the Air next week

On Thursday next, 6 metre operators should have a listen for the 50MHz UK Activity contest which runs from 2000 to 2230UTC. Using all modes, the exchange is signal report, serial number and locator. Also, for VHF operators, the Second Machine Generated Mode contest runs from 1400UTC on the Saturday the 12th to 1400UTC on Sunday the 13th. Use any machine generated mode on the 50 and 144MHz bands, the exchange is signal report and your 4-character locator. For HF operators, next weekend has the ARRL 10 metre contest running for 48 hours from midnight on Friday the 12th to midnight on Sunday the 13th on both CW and SSB. The exchange is signal report and serial number with US stations sending their State code and Canadians their Province code. With the recent improvement in band conditions, this could be a lively contest. And now to some DX news. Alexey, RX6A, who is on his way to Antarctica will be on the air as RX6A/MM from December 7th to the 25th and as RI01ANT from December 25, 2020 to May 30, 2021. He will be using CW and FT8 on 40 to 15 metres, with 50 watts. QSL information is on QRZ.com. The Bia DXpedition Team is active as 7C9B from the Indonesian island of Sumbawa until the 10th of December. Listen for team members on 10 to 160 metres using SSB and FT8. QSLs go to DL3KZA. Lee, DS4NMJ was expected to reach the Jang Bogo Station in Terra Nova Bay, Antarctica around the 4th of December, and then King George Island, South Shetland, by mid-January 2021. Lee will be operating as DT8A through to the end of the year. QSL via DS5TOS. The log will be uploaded to Logbook of The World and Club Log. Yoshida, JE1SCJ is currently active as 9M4DXX from Penang Island (Asia-15), West Malaysia until the end of the year. Apparently, his plans are to concentrate on the low bands FT8 during the weekends. QSL direct to JA0DMV. Dale McWilliams MD/EI7HDB is QRV from the Point of Ayre Lighthouse on all bands from 80 metres to 6 metres SSB only and 2 metres FM until December 14th while self-isolating. Starting December 10th, look out for Israeli special event stations celebrating Chanukah, the festival of light. Callsigns will include 4X0NER, 4X1C,

4X2H, 4X3A, 4X4N, 4X5U plus others. They will be active until December 19th on all bands and the QO-100 satellite. Certificates are available for working the stations and details are available on [iarc.org](http://iarc.org).

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That is the news for this week. Items for inclusion in next week's radio news can be submitted by email to [newsteam@irts.ie](mailto:newsteam@irts.ie) for automatic forwarding to both the radio and printed news services. The deadline is midnight on Thursday. Urgent items for the news may be telephoned to 087-6290574

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